

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended) A method of qualitative or quantitative assay of collagen type II or fragments thereof in a biological sample comprising contacting said fragments with an immunological binding partner which is immunoreactive with an epitope comprised in the amino acid sequence HRGYPGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1) and detecting resulting immunoreaction.

Claim 2. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said epitope consists of five or more amino acids in said sequence.

Claim 3. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said immunological binding partner is reactive with said epitope in the context of unwound collagen type II or fragments thereof but not in the context of the wound form of collagen type II.

Claim 4. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the detected immunoreaction is between said immunological binding partner and collagen type II fragments of less than 80 kDa.

Claim 5. (original) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein said fragments are of less than 30 kDa.

Claim 6. (original) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein said fragments are of less than 10 kDa.

Claim 7. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said sample is a biological fluid.

Claim 8. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein said biological fluid is serum, urine, tear fluid, synovial fluid, subcutaneous interstitial fluid, a cell culture supernatant fluid, or a cell extract.

Claim 9. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said detected immunoreaction is indicative of degradation of cartilage.

Claim 10. (currently amended) An immunological binding partner which recognises an epitope derived from collagen type II which is comprised in the amino acid sequence HRGYPGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1).

Claim 11. (original) A binding partner as claimed in claim 10, which is reactive with said epitope in the context of unwound collagen type II or fragments thereof but not in the context of the wound form of collagen type II.

Claim 12. (previously presented) A cell line producing a monoclonal assay which is an immunological binding partner as claimed in claim 10.

Claim 13. (currently amended) A kit for performing an assay as claimed in claim 1 and comprising: an immunological binding partner which is immunoreactive with an epitope comprised in the amino acid sequence HRGYPGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1); and means for detecting immunoreaction between said immunological binding partner and a sample.

Claim 14. (original) A kit as claimed in claim 13, wherein said immunological binding partner bears a detectable label or is immobilised to a solid material.

Claim 15. (previously presented) A kit as claimed in claim 13, wherein said kit comprises a

peptide which comprises said epitope and competes with collagen type II or fragments thereof for binding to said immunological binding partner.

Claim 16. (original) A kit as claimed in claim 15, wherein said peptide bears a detectable label or is immobilised to a solid surface.